

open access

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open access, both easy & difficult

■ simple concept, complicated realities

- ✓ “do in the digital age what publishers and public libraries did in the old days: make accessible to the public what is/should be public knowledge”
- ✓ a matter of digital access [searchable, harvestable]
- ✓ of business [contracts, licenses, paying and pricing]
- ✓ of quality [peer review, citations and rankings]
- ✓ of archives [preservation, continuity and authenticity]
- ✓ of e-science [digital innovations, virtual labs and “collaboratories”]
- ✓ of variety [in academic, business and professional cultures]

open access en vogue

- hot [?] topic in the research community (researchers and funding agencies) and in the publishing business, growing concern among politicians, and academic leaders, and librarians
- main driver: in the world of digital technologies open access is a common feature (we don't like barriers there, and have forgotten all about waiting and seeking)
- enabled by the digital revolution and stimulated by the www-experience, especially in the case of public goods and public interests (like research funded by public money and public education)

elementary open access

- what doesn't exist in the digital mode (cannot be found by search machines) has less chance to be used, quoted and valued
- so the basic rule of all researchers should be “make your work digitally traceable, searchable, harvestable”
- self-archiving is a quite satisfactory way to achieve this (do it yourself or have your – digital - assistant do it)
- all you need is a well-connected and well-arranged repository
- almost all publishers allow it, and those who don't do not object

elementary open access, fine print

- repositories should be interconnected and standardized (search machine friendly), whether managed by institution, nation or academic discipline
- deposited versions should be clearly labelled (pre/post prints etc)
- a clear and simple license allowing for early depositing is preferable
- why do only a few of us actually practice what we preach?

open access, the business side

- digital journals could be freely accessible to all and harvestable by all if subscriptions would be replaced by advance payments
- the publishing business would continue its business in the public broadcasting mode (cost paid by those who want to disseminate, rather than those at the receiving end)
- new business models are attractive and feasible (vide SCOAP³: sponsoring consortium for open access publishing in particle physics)
- from a university point of view dual mode publishing (“open choice”) only complicates matters

open access, the clients' side

- open access does not solve the pricing issues, it only requires somewhat adjusted payment schemes (migration seems complicated but doable)
- intellectually the idea of sending bills to researchers (rather than to librarians) changes the feel of publishing and its cost,
- thereby stimulating new approaches
- and underlining the need to overcome fragmentation by cooperating

open access, quality matters

- scientific publishing, or rather to be or not to be published is an essential part of the reputation game (academic prestige matters for all involved, just think of career enhancement)
- some kind of peer hierarchy on the basis of reviewing (before or after the act) is and remains crucial, also for professional use outside academia
- this, however, doesn't imply a conservative attitude towards present practice
- yet, quality labelling must be done and if publishers don't organize it, someone else should

open access and archiving

- open access by itself doesn't change archiving and its challenges in the digital age
- no problem, as long as responsible publishers and/or libraries continue to play their roles....
- if and where “traditional” journals (in the digital mode) no longer cover the whole field, archiving becomes an issue
- it can and should be handled by public library consortia

e-science is much more than open access

- **the digital mode offers much more than a digital metamorphosis of traditional ways of publishing and scholarly communicating**
- **data sharing, virtual labs, collaboratories, wiki's by and for academics, multi-media e-learning – there is much more innovative potential than realized thus far**
- **we need projects and experiments**
- **and forerunners like the university presses consortium and science innovators, like Barend Mons**

e-science is a miscellaneous thing

- **one of the secrets of the success of the university is its complexity (what makes sense to historians doesn't impress engineers)**
- **the disparate nature of research cultures and traditions, national preferences, professional usage and language networks stand in the way of simple solutions across the board, both in e-science and in digitally re-mastered scholarly publishing**
- **and some aspects tend to be forgotten, like what about the book in the digital age? and European educational material?**

open access, final slide

- the digital mode offers much more than a digital metamorphosis of traditional ways of publishing
- the concept won't go away, although some of the old ways will stay with us (like drawing, painting and sailing)
- European cooperation may make the difference (a stronger public power?)